

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 1930

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OREP, IV

SUBJECT: CODEL DIGGS MEETING WITH IVORY COAST PRESIDENT

HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

REF: ABIDJAN 1889

1. AT THE CONGRESSMAN'S REQUEST, HE WAS RECEIVED MARCH 5 BY PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, AT THE PRESIDENT'S VILLA IN COCODY. CODEL WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS 11-YEAR-OLD SON DOUGLASS AND BY CHARGE AND ECON COUNSELOR.

2. AFTER THE USUAL EXCHANGE OF COURTESIES, DIGGS ASKED THE PRESIDENT FOR SOME INSIGHT TO THE CURRENT POLICY OF DETENTE WITH SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH DIGGS SAID WAS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT IN LIBERIA AND WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET'S VIEWS, SINCE HOUPHOUET'S NAME HAS FOR SUCH A LONG TIME BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH DIALOGUE. (DIGGS HAD INDICATED TO ME PREVIOUSLY THAT THE ONLY SUBJECT OF HIS

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CONVERSATION WOULD BE SOUTH AFRICA.)

3. THE PRESIDENT GAVE DIGGS A LECTURE ON THE FUTILITY OF WAR, WHICH HE SAID THE SUPERPOWERS HAVE FINALLY REALIZED, WHICH IS THE REASON FOR THE CURRENT EAST-WEST DENTE WHICH HE, OF COURSE, FAVORS. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS AGAINST ANY USE OF VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY IN AFRICA. IN HIS VIEW "DIALOGUE" IS THE ONLY CORRECT COURSE IN AFRICA. HE REFERRED TO THE ARAB INVASION OF EGYPT AND NORTH AFRICA AND SAID "THE ARABS HAVE BECOME OUR AFRICAN BROTHERS." HE REFERRED TO THE MIGRATION OF THE DUTCH AND THE BRITISH TO SOUTH AFRICA, "WHICH THEY DEVELOPED," AND THEREBY BECAME "OUR WHITE AFRICAN BROTHERS." HE SAID THAT WE ARE ALL AFRICANS AND WE MUST NOT FIGHT. ("THE WEST WOULD NOT SEND ONE BULLET TO HELP BLACK AFRICANS FIGHT WHITE AFRICANS, BUT THE CHINESE AND THE SOVIETS WOULD BE WILLING AND EAGER TO DO SO AND TO SEND ADVISORS TOO. IT WOULD ONLY BE AFTER THE MIGS APPEARED OVER THE SKIES OF SOUTH AFRICA THAT THE WEST WOULD SEND THE MIRAGES AND PHANTOMS.")

4. HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY SAID THAT WE MUST NOT ISOLATE SOUTH AFRICA; THAT IS NOT ONLY FUTILE BUT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. HE CITED FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXCLUSION OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE OLYMPICS, WHICH HE SAID WAS WRONG.

5. DIGGS THEN ASKED WHAT QUID PRO QUO BLACK AFRICANS GOT FOR DIALOGUE? HOUPHOUET TICKED OFF THE FOLLOWING:

A. SOUTH AFRICAN DID NOT SUPPORT WHITE EXTREMISTS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE.

B. SOUTH AFRICA HAS PROMISED PROGRESSIVELY TO WITHDRAW ITS POLICE FORCE FROM RHODESIA.

C. SOUTH AFRICA AGREES THAT NAMIBIA SHOULD MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE.

D. EVEN IN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE. THE BIGGEST HOTELS ARE DESEGRATING, WHITE ATHLETIC TEAMS ARE COMPETING AGAINST BLACK ATHLETIC TEAMS, AND BLACK DIPLOMATS ARE PERMITTED TO CIRCULATE FREELY IN WHITE AREAS. AT THIS POINT, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT THE BLACK AFRICAN

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STATES SHOULD ALL SEND AMBASSADORS TO SOUTH AFRICA BECAUSE BLACK AMBASSADORS WOULD LIVE IN THE WHITE AREAS AND THEIR CHILDREN WOULD GO TO THE WHITE SCHOOLS. HE SAID THAT JUST AS BLACK AFRICANS IN U.N. HAD HELPED THE UNITED STATES SPEED UP ITS DESEGRATION IN AMERICA, BLACK DIPLOMATS COULD ALSO HELP SPEED UP THE CHANGES WHICH ARE INEVITABLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

5. HOUPHOUET SAID THAT WHEN HE FIRST CHAMPIONED DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICA, HE WAS WIDELY CRITICIZED, EVEN BY TOLBERT. WE SAID THAT WHEN HE ATTENDED HIS FRIEND TOLBERT'S INAUGURATION, TOLBERT ATTACKED DIALOGUE IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS, BUT NOW TOLBERT HAS COME AROUND TO HOUPHOUET'S SIDE OF THE TABLE. HOUPHOUET CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE SUPPORTS DIALOGUE BECAUSE HE IS CONVINCED THAT IT IS RIGHT. HE INTENDS TO CONTINUE UNTIL SOMEONE CAN PROVE TO HIM THAT HE IS WRONG.

6. HE SAID THE PARTITION OF PALESTINE SATISFIED NEITHER THE ARABS NOR THE ISRAELIS. "PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA MANY YEARS AGO RECOGNIZED THAT DIALOGUE WAS THE ONLY VIABLE APPROACH TO THIS PROBLEM, BUT NO ONE LISTENED TO HIM. NOW AFTER THREE WARS WE ARE FINALLY COMING TO REALIZE THAT DIALOGUE IS THE ONLY APPROPRIATE POLICY. NOW IT IS THE LEADERS OF THE SUPERPOWERS, KISSINGER AND GROMYKO, WHO ARE TRYING TO INDUCE THE DIALOGUE BUT THE SITUATION IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT WAS BEFORE THE WARS."

7. DIGGS COMMENTED THAT ONLY THREE COUNTRIES IN AFRICA HAD TO ACHIEVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE BY FORCE, NAMELY ALGERIA, KENYA AND GUINEA BISSAU. THUS HOUPHOUET'S POSITION REGARDING NEGOTIATIONS WAS CONSISTENT WITH HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS.

8. CODEL DIGGS WAS OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESPONSES HE RECEIVED FROM HOUPHOUET AS HE WAS EARLIER IN THE MORNING (REFTEL) WHEN HE TRIED TO ELICIT FOREIGN MINISTER USHER'S SUPPORT FOR HIS OBJECTIONS TO THE DAVIS NOMINATION. BUT, HE GRACIOUSLY THANKED THE PRESIDENT, AND WHEN MET BY THE LOCAL PRESS ON DEPARTURE, SPOKE VERY HIGHLY OF THE PRESIDENT.

9. FINAL REPORT ON CODEL DIGGS' VISIT FOLLOWS BY SEPTTEL.
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